



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**1420 E 6th Ave, PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701
(406) 444-1267**

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action

1. Project Title: Hot Springs Shooting Sports Complex

2. Type of Proposed Action: Build Shooting Sports Complex

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The proposed range site is on 40 acres approximately 3 miles from the town of Hot Springs and about 1 mile from Highway 28 on Little Bitterroot Road. The site is located on property owned by the town of Hot Springs in the NE ¼, NW ¼, Sec. 6, T21N, R23W.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

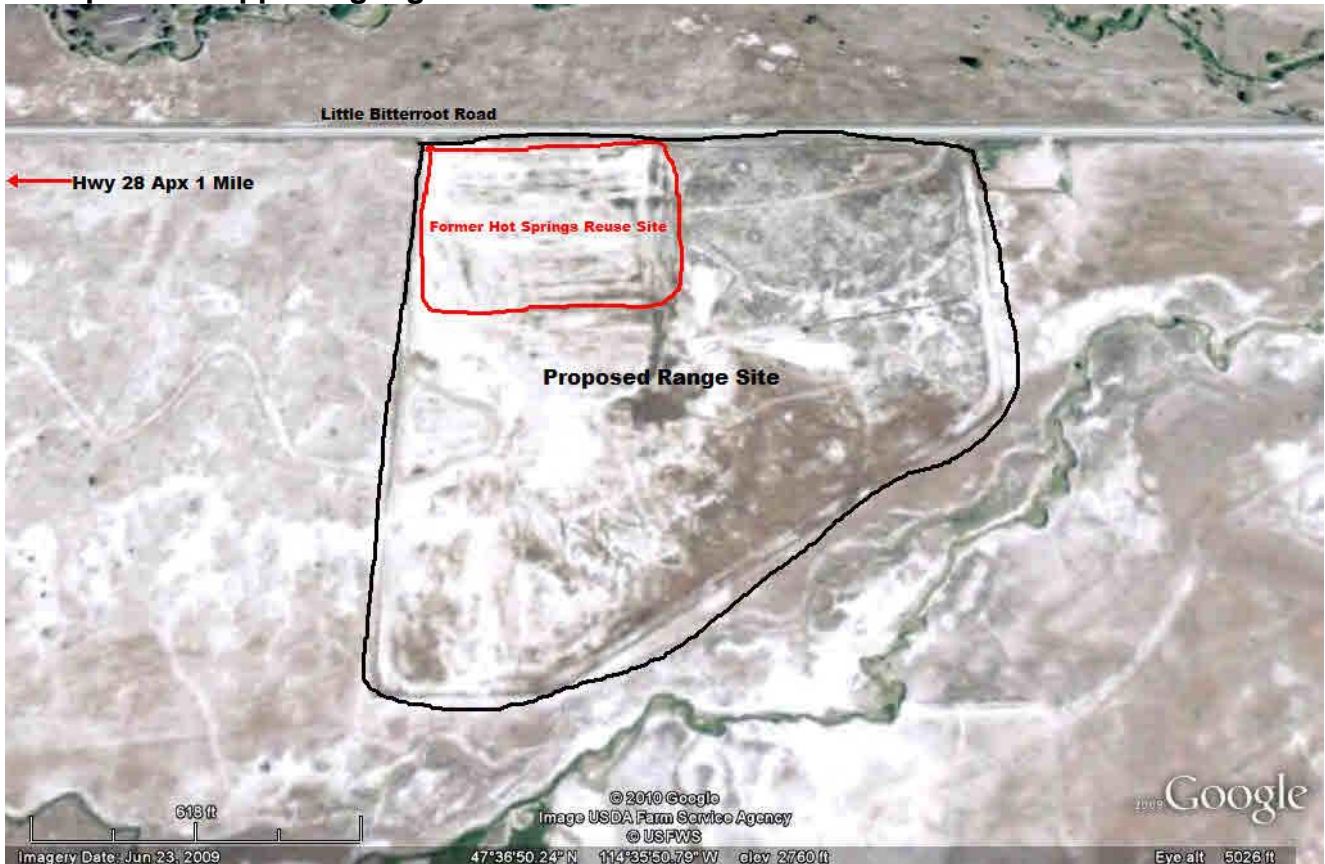
To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

- (a)(i) shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*
 - (ii) may not limit the number of members;*
 - (iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*
 - (iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*
- (b) shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s): The town of Hot Springs, and its surrounding area, has no reasonably accessible shooting range.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): Provide a safe controlled environment for shooting sports within the Hot Springs area with handicapped access.

7. Maps and Supporting Figures:



Map 1 – Area Map showing proposed site for the Hot Springs Shooting Sports Complex.

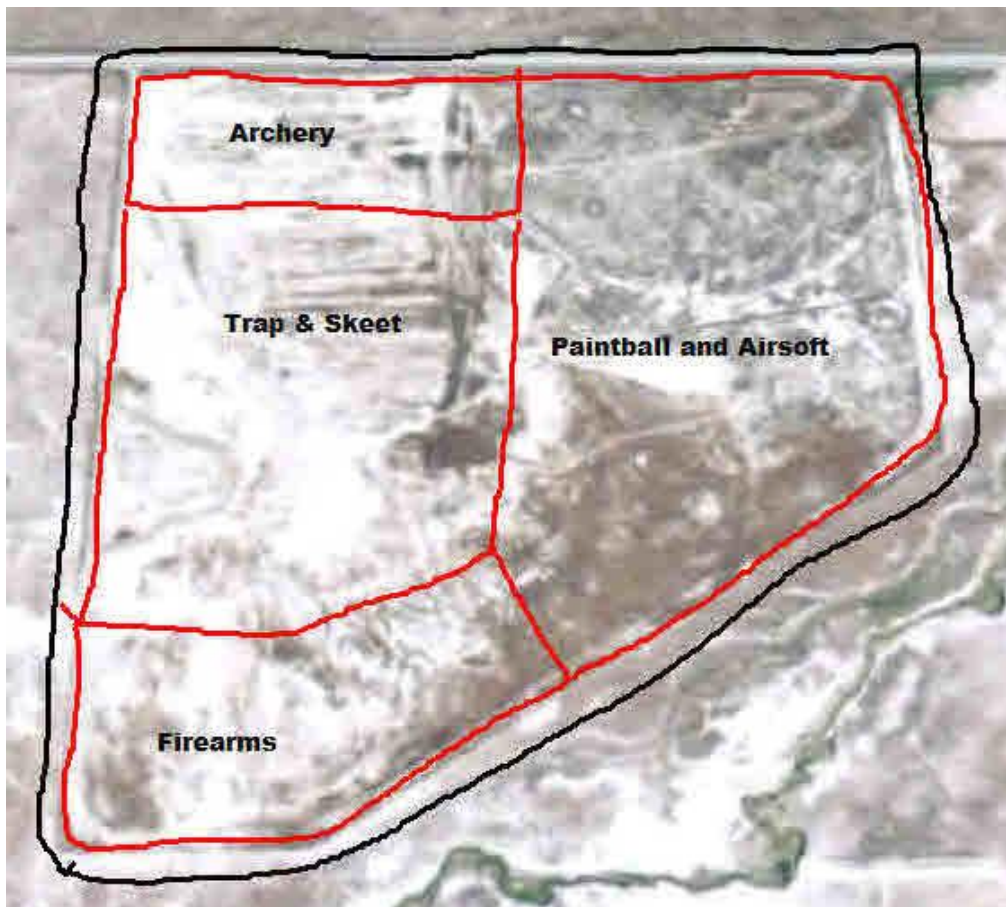


Figure 1 – Approximate range layout without more detailed plans following in Figures 2-4.

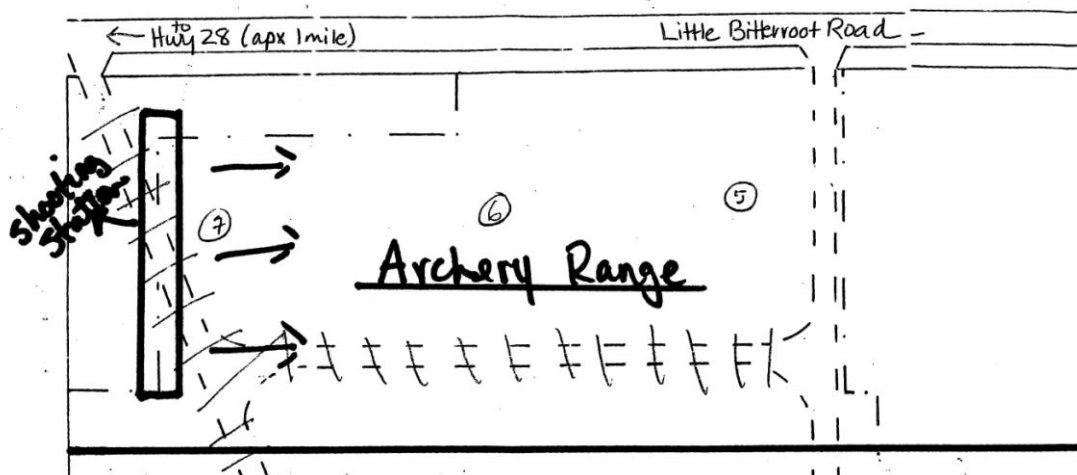


Figure 2 – Archery Range First of three ranges running north to south along west boundary.

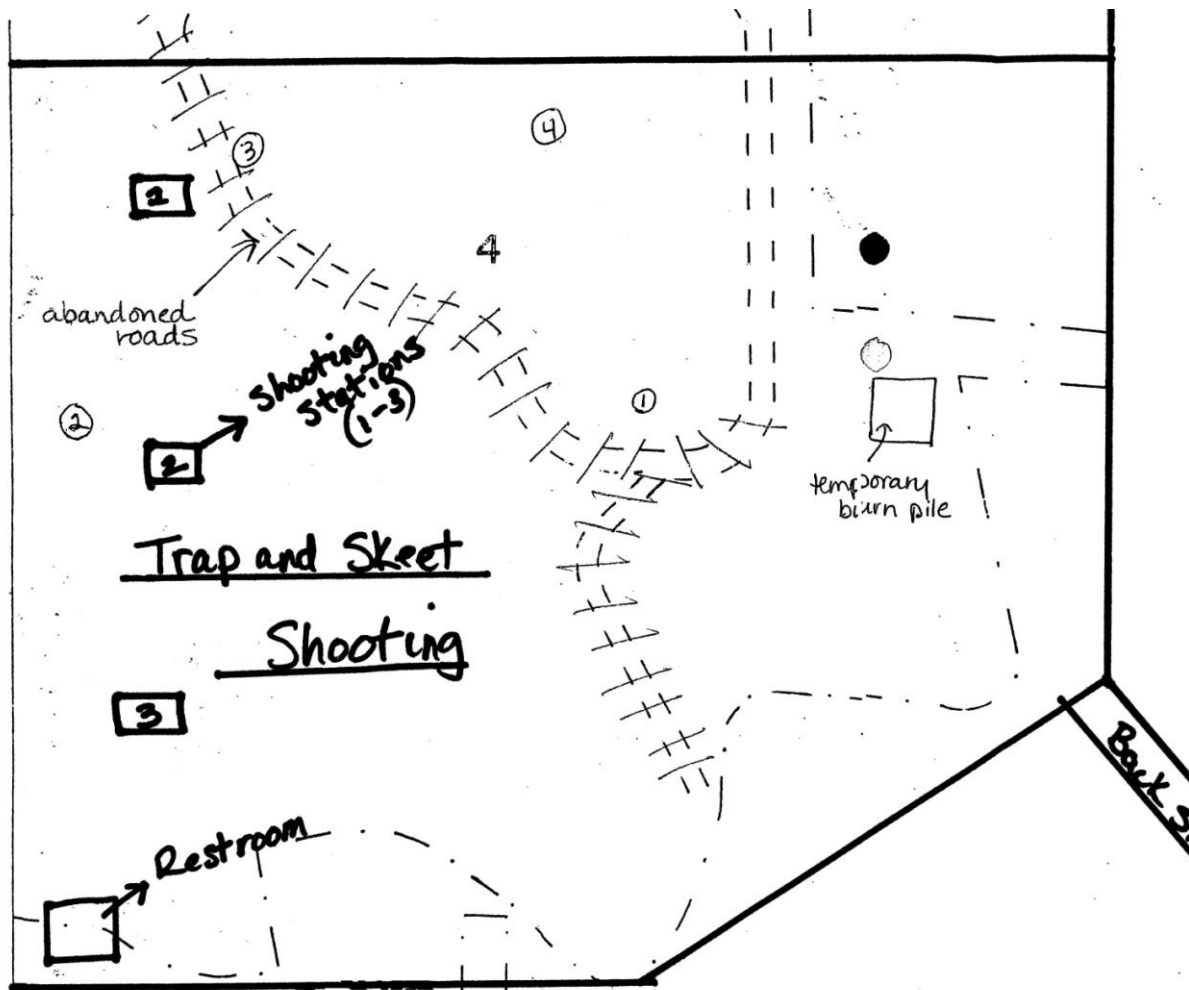


Figure 3 – Trap & Skeet Range between Archery Range to the north & Firearms range to the south.

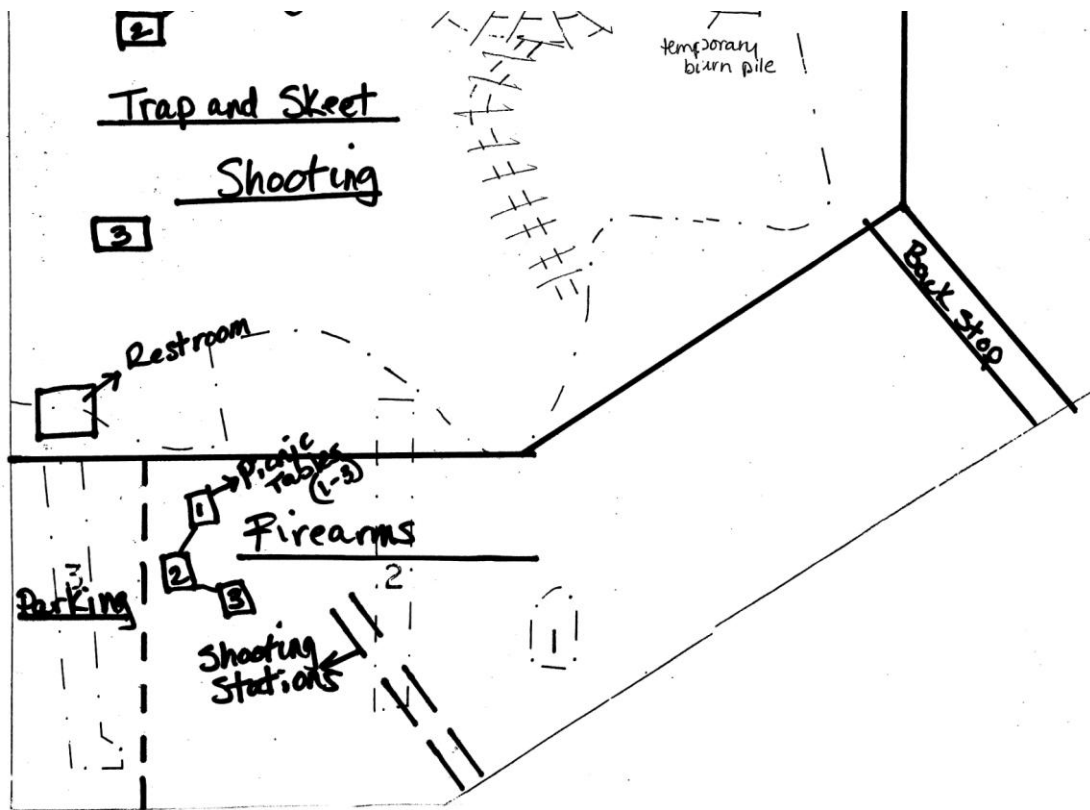


Figure 4 – Firearms Range in southwest corner (below) the Trap & Skeet Range.

8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed improvements will be safely within a smaller area of the overall properties.

9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): Twelve acres of the site was formerly used as a solid waste landfill, which has been closed and capped. The surrounding area and part of range is or was formerly agricultural. There are no delineated wetlands, nor natural water sources within the area proposed for development, but there is an irrigation channel that runs through the southwest corner of the range property. That irrigation water drains into Hot Springs Creek.

10. Description of Project: To build a shooting sports complex that will initially offer archery, trap and skeet, firearms range, and paintball and airsoft area(s), with room for expansion into other venues (See figures 1-4 for site configuration. The following items will need to be accomplished to complete this proposed project:

- a) Build earthworks
- b) Construct shooting stations
- c) Purchase & assemble targets
- d) Design and build an area for clay pigeon shooting

- e) Design and make a paintball course
- f) Make an area for Airsoft equipment
- g) Erect an outhouse
- h) Pour sidewalks
- i) Clear and gravel parking lot

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2011.

11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

Agency Name	Permit
NONE	

Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$54,701

12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:

Fish Wildlife & Parks Hunter Education Programs, 4H clubs, and host for a variety of shooting sports events.

13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:

The project has been discussed during town council meetings of the town of Hot Springs. Those meetings their minutes or transactions are open or available to the public. This range proposal had also been discussed with the associated project vendors and contractors. On April 20, 2010, the town council approved, through a resolution, the grant proposal for this project and it was forwarded to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Randy Woods, P.O. Box 669, Hot Springs, MT 59845, 741-2325

16. Other Pertinent Information: The shooting range complex will be administered by the City of Hot Springs Parks and Recreation Board. Within the 40 acre site is a 12 acre site in the NW corner that was formerly a solid waste landfill. That site has been closed and capped IAW state and federal guidelines.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 20, 2010.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		#4
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		#7
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		#8
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments

2. & 5. There are no delineated wetlands and no natural water sources within the area proposed for development. However there is an irrigation runoff along the south that drains into Hot Springs Creek.

4. The elimination of vegetation for the implementation of the proposed action will not change the overall abundance and diversity of plant species within the area. The proposed projects occupy a very small portion of the individual properties and native vegetation is minimally present anywhere on the property, due to prior land use. Therefore it is determined to have an insignificant impact on native vegetation in the area.

7. The project will cause limited displacement of soils but these improvements and construction will

not substantially effect geological features or establish new erosion patterns. Soil disruption for this site is localized. Erosion control measures will be in effect and disturbed areas are to be reseeded.

8. Minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created by construction equipment during the proposed improvements within this project area. However the construction time is short and human effects will be limited due to the sparse population in the surrounding area.

9. This project uses no federal funds, therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations does not apply, but the State Antiques Act does apply, when projects are on state owned properties. Previous archeological surveys on the shooting complex did not find any historical or archeological sites in current proposed project areas.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		#9
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments

4. The site is adjacent to surrounding agricultural land primarily used for grazing.

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range complex will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

9. This is a rural area with a low population density. There is only one farm operation adjacent to the proposed site.

Part III. Environmental Consequences

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I paragraph 10 (Description of Project) to build a shooting sports complex.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will not be developed into a shooting sports complex without other sources of funding and will remain in its current status.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** increasing shooting sports opportunities in the Hot Springs community by offering a variety of shooting sports opportunities with handicapped accessibility.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not provide the variety of shooting sports opportunities proposed in the Hot Springs Shooting Sports Complex, but to continue without any shooting sports opportunities within the community. Land use would remain the same. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE

List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):

NONE

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Randy Woods, PO Box 669, Hot Springs, MT 59845
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties owned by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The low impact activities proposed, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The town of Hot Springs' proposed shooting sports complex, to provide a safe regulated shooting opportunity is supported by the community. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the expansion proposals outlined in Part I paragraphs 2 & 10.

EA prepared by: GENE R. HICKMAN
M.S. Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: June 21, 2010

PART V. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

None required.

Describe public involvement, if any:

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Clark Fork Valley Press in Plains, MT and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website.